

remarks, that an unemployed man who falls sick should be expected to maintain himself and his family on about half the benefit he enjoyed when still available for work. Rather than go on the lower scale and supplement it by out-relief, such a man is tempted to ignore his malady and aggravate it by a continued search or pretended search for work.

Except on this one point, the report refrains from criticism of the existing system or of its administration. Since its publication, fresh light has been thrown on its subject by a report of the district auditor of the Ministry of Health, severely criticizing the administration of public assistance in Liverpool and suggesting laxity and extravagance. The Local Authority has responded by introducing drastic changes in administrative method and in scale. It is to be hoped that Mr. Caradog Jones will in a future report analyse the result of these changes.

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CRIMINOLOGY

East, Norwood, M.D., F.R.C.P. *Medical Aspects of Crime.* London, 1936. J. & A. Churchill Ltd. Pp. 437. Price 15s.

IN a foreword, Sir John Simon writes: "I most heartily commend this book to the attention of all who give serious thought to the problem of the causes and the cure of crime." This sentence will be endorsed by all who read this book. Dr. East has had thirty-six years' experience of his subject, and is now generally regarded as our foremost authority on the medical aspects of crime. For the last twenty-five years he has been in much demand as lecturer and speaker, and no one who has heard his addresses can have failed to be impressed by his erudition and his balance of judgment.

This volume is a collection of papers which have been read before various scientific and specialist lay audiences interested in criminology. The eighteen chapters cover such widely separated topics as the medical

aspects of prison administration, psychological medicine and criminal law, medical problems connected with the prosecution of offenders, medical aspects of prison labour, and murder from the point of view of the psychiatrist. Some of the chapters have but little bearing upon eugenics. In others, however, members of the *Society* will find discussed many subjects which touch them closely. To what extent, we may ask ourselves, are such manifestations as suicide, adult crime, alcohol or drug addiction, exhibitionism and murder the expression of inborn characteristics which appear in certain families or strains? To what extent are they preventable by genetic as well as social measures? Upon such problems Dr. East has many illuminating things to say.

In a valuable chapter summarising the observations made upon a thousand cases of attempted suicide, a distinction is made between the features exhibited by people who *attempt* to kill themselves and by those who *succeed* in killing themselves. We learn that, allowing for defects in the available information, the family histories of the former group show that in 27·1 per cent. of cases there was parental intemperance; in 0·6 per cent. parental epilepsy; and in 10·2 per cent. parental insanity. The important connection between alcoholic intoxication and attempted suicide is effectively stressed. An analogous connection is discovered between exhibitionism and inebriety. Cases of indecent exposure were more frequently met with in 1913 when liquor was cheap, than ten years later. Of a series of 150 cases, two-thirds were classed as psychopathic (in that they suffer from undeveloped psychoses, psycho-neuroses, mental defect, etc.), and the remaining third as "depraved," the act being preliminary to an attempt at carnal knowledge, or part of an attempt to debauch children, or a gesture designed to attract, excite or invite a female.

The relation of adolescent criminals, drug addicts and alcohol addicts to the social problem group are discussed in other chapters. The adolescent criminal, who is described in a series of vivid pen pictures, is

regarded as a representative of Adolph Meyer's group of "constitutional inferiors," and August Wimmer is quoted as stating that his psychic anomalies are "mostly due to hereditary influences." But we must here discriminate between the persons whose criminal tendencies are "inborn" in the sense that they develop in a normal environment, and those in whom they are "hereditary" in the sense that abnormalities of a comparable character are observable among parents and near relatives. The first condition may be the expression of nothing more than an unfortunate combination of genetic factors in an individual the other members of whose pedigree are normal.

Neither alcohol nor the commonly used drugs are regarded as common causes of mental defect. But mental defectives are regarded as abnormally susceptible to the influence of alcohol.

Murder is frequently though by no means invariably committed by persons who are insane, and Dr. East gives a searching analysis of the normal and abnormal impulses which, in a series of cases, appear to be responsible for this crime.

From the standpoint of this *Society*, the most interesting chapter is that which deals with sterilization and the modern penal system. It reproduces a paper contributed to the International Penal and Penitentiary Congress held at Berlin in 1935. The chapter begins with a review of the literature bearing upon the evidence that criminal tendencies may be inherited. The twin studies of Lange, Legras, the Rosanoffs and Handy are summarized and the argument leads on to a discussion of the relevance to criminals of the two processes of castration and sterilization, the former having been legalized as a curative measure in Denmark and Germany. Dr. East concludes by saying that "no physician, biologist, eugenicist or criminologist is in a position to declare that the criminality of any individual will be transmitted; and amidst so much difficulty, doubt and perhaps misunderstanding, eugenic sterilization, as a means of combating crime, appears to be previous and unwarranted. . . . The sterilization of

criminals is only a small part of the larger problem, and eugenic sterilization as a means to combat transmissible mental and physical disease is not yet established generally. It is important that progress in this direction is not endangered by association in the public mind with the stigma of crime." This, it will be recalled, was the position taken up by the Brock Committee.

C. P. BLACKER.

Schorsch, G. *Eigenständigkeit, Fremdhalt und Haltlosigkeit. Ein charakterologischer Beitrag zum Problem: Führertum und Gefolgschaft.* (Independence of character, aloofness, and instability. A character analysis as a contribution to the problem, leadership and docility.) Samml. Psychiat. Neurol. Einzeldarst. Leipzig, 1936. Georg Thieme. Pp. 65. Price RM. 3.85.

THE author takes five representative cases of individuals of the type commonly referred to as "ne'er-do-weels," whose records are known with some accuracy owing to their having come under the charge of clinics or similar institutions. The occupation and main characteristics of the two parents are given for each case and the record of the patient described in detail, largely from the account given by the parents to the clinical authorities, with typical extracts from letters or remarks made by the patient. Each case is then analysed and the reasons, hereditary and environmental, for the particular behaviour of the individual are discussed. The phenomenon of "fecklessness" in general is then discussed, and the general characteristics of the subjects are set forth. Their characteristics are complete instability of character, and consequent failure to make any use of their natural qualities, together with an entire lack of personality and undue dependence on others. To aid in assessing the material, similar data are presented for cases of the opposite type, of individuals of an excessively independent and commanding nature, whose unbending and unswerving force of personality lead them also into